

would be debarred from direct communication with the Atlantic Ocean and those Southern regions whence it must always derive many daily necessities of civilized life in exchange for the products of its own northern industry. The manner in which the permission 'o convey goods across the States affects the latter, is expounded in the same report as follows. —So soon as the routes and markets of the United States were opened by the Treaty the imports and exports by the St. Lawrence decreased from \$33,673,128 in 1854, the year before the Treaty, to \$18,469,528 in 1855, the year after the Treaty took effect: that is to the extent of \$15,203,600. "And the whole," says the Committee, "was transferred to our carriers, for in the same year the trade of the United States increased \$15,855,624," and this in spite of "heavy differential duties in Great Britain in favor of colonial timber sent by way of the St. Lawrence, tending to increase the shipments by that route." It is desirable that these facts should be recalled to the memory of the United States in order to enable them the better to value the counsel given by their sagacious President. We take it that, even to gratify the ambition of General Grant and assist his return at the next Presidential election, the States will not care to forego so large an advantage.

TERRIFIC EXPLOSION.

FULL PARTICULARS OF THE CATASTROPHE NEAR BIRMINGHAM—SEVENTEEN MEN KILLED AND ONE HUNDRED WOUNDED.

On the morning of December 9, about 11.40 o'clock, one of the most terrible catastrophes that has ever visited Birmingham, took place at the ammunition factory belonging to Messrs. Dudley, at Witton Lane, Witton. The scene of the accident is a large field about a mile from the Ashton Lower grounds and in the direction of Perry Barr. Here are situated nineteen sheds, in which the work of making and priming Enfield cartridges is carried on, some 500 hands being employed. At the time stated, the inhabitants of the neighborhood and persons at a distance even of two miles, were alarmed by a series of explosions, accompanied by shocks as of an earthquake and severe concussions of the atmosphere. On reaching the locality of the explosion a scene of destruction was revealed of the most appalling character. Three sheds, in which there had been working five minutes before about 100 girls, boys and men, were a mass of ruins, and in the smoking, blackened heap there was scarcely a sign of life. Ready hands were soon at work, and the awful extent of loss of human life then became apparent. A few had escaped the burning mass, and were limping off, while the helpless who gave any signs of life, were quickly conveyed in carts and cabs, which had come to the spot on the alarm being given. No fewer than fifty terribly burned and mutilated, but living human forms were carried off with all speed to the General Hospital, the condition of many being pitiable in the extreme. Some of those taken thither were so badly burned as to be hardly recognisable. Bleeding and insensible they were quickly put under the medical care of the staff of the hospital, but it was too evident many a sufferer entered only to prolong a lingering existence, till death added new victims to the list. The scene among the wretched remains of the sheds was of the most sickening description. The field was strewn with the mutilated remains of human bodies and pieces of clothing covered with blood. In one shed lay the charred bodies of seven,

and in another those of five workers, while at the Witton Arms lay another five persons all disfigured so as to be beyond recognition. Each body lay smouldering and smoking on a shutter, covered by tarpulin, and beneath this was nothing but a mass of rags and charred flesh and bones. In some cases there was only a charred skeleton, and in others the head, arms and legs were missing. A human head supposed to be that of a female, was picked up in the field, and a human hand was found in the same manner. Seventeen are ascertained up to the present time to be killed, but no names can be given as identification is impossible at this stage. It is rumored that the cause of this dreadful affair was the accidental ignition of a woman's apron who was standing warming herself at a stove, which, strange to say, every shed contains. The scene in and around the field after the accident was enough to move the most callous observer. The eager enquiries of anxious mothers for their children, and of relatives for missing work-people, were heart-rending. Little groups were gathered here and there along the road, surrounding a pale and suffering victim, bringing water, and doing all that ingenuity could suggest to allay the agony of the moment.

PENN'S ESCAPE.

From the Eastern, Penn., Argus.

Mr. Juddkins, librarian of the Massachusetts Historical Society, in overhauling a chest of old papers deposited in the archives of that body by the late Robert Greenleaf, of Malden, has recently made a curious discovery which has especial interest for the people of Pennsylvania. Among these papers was one of ancient date, which bore this endorsement: "Ye scheme to bagge Penne." This curious title attracted the attention of Mr. Juddkins, and he examined the contents of the document with more than common interest. It is the familiar and quaint handwriting of the Reverend Cotton Mather, and is addressed to 'Ye aged and beloved Mr. John Higginson.' It bears date, 'September ye 15th 1682,' and reads thus, the odd spelling the original being followed to the letter.

"There bee now at sea (for our friend Mr. Esaias Hiccart of London did advise me by the last packet that it wolde sail some time in August), called ye Welcome, R. Greenway master, which has aboard a hundred or more of ye heretics and malignants called Quakers with W. Penne, who is ye chief scamp at ye hedde of them. Ye general Court has accordingly given secret orders to Master Malachi Huxett, of ye brig *Pro-pose* to waylaye ye said Welcome slyly as near ye coast of Codde, as may be and make captive ye said Penne and his ungodlie crewe so thatt ye Lord may be glorified and not mocked on ye soil of this new countrie with ye heathen worshippe of these people. Much spoyle can be made by selling ye whole lotte to Barbadoes, where slaves fetch good prices in rumme and sugar and shall not only do ye Lord great service by punishing ye wicked but we shall make great gayne for his ministers and people. Master Huxett feels hopeful and I will set down the newes he brings when his shippe comes back.

"Yours in ye bowells of Christ,

"COTTON MATHER."

Master Huxett missed his reckoning, and Penn sailed secure within the capes of the Delaware. But it is curious to reflect on the narrow chance by which the founder of this commonwealth escaped the fate of many of

his religious brethren who were cast ashore on the relentless coast of Massachusetts. It is strange to fancy the wise lawgiver, endeared to the hearts of a great people and to posterity by his wisdom, sagacity and benevolence, losing sugar in Barbadoes under the lash of a Yankee overseer, or crushing cane into rum to thaw the granite gizzards which Mather and his theological brethren carried about instead of hearts. Ah! how the ancient Cotton must have mourned for the marketable Quakers and the refreshing "rumme" which came not. It is delightful to think how he never got a bit of the "spoyle" which his devilish old owl held in delicious anticipation—how brother Higginson watched fondly for his hogshhead and dreamed of swallowing his half score of heretics in pious punches. They would have made a "rum cretur" of the Great founder, in a literal sense, if they had got him, but thanks to the good steering of "R. Greenway, master," they didn't get him.

BREAKING UP STEAMSHIPS.—The Boston Advertiser makes the following noteworthy remarks;—One of the most striking evidences of the decline of our commercial maritime is noticeable in the fearful sacrifices made in the sale of steamships by auction and otherwise. A well known firm in this city doing business on Federal street, has accumulated a fortune in purchasing at low figures ocean and coasting steamers, taking out the machinery and breaking up the hulls for copper, iron and other valuable material. Quite recently they purchased for a trifling sum the beautiful steamship *Seminole*, now lying on the dock between the Old Colony Railroad and South Boston bridge. The steamer is only eight years old, built in the most thorough manner of seasoned timber coppered and copper fastenings throughout and of superb model. A few days since the same firm purchased at auction in New York the well known and famed steamers, *Alabama* and *Morning Star* for the trifling sum of thirty thousand dollars for the same purpose.

The total number of deaths from snake-bite in British India during 1869 is stated to have been 11,416. This total, large as it is, is, however, derived from very inadequate returns, so that it is considered more than probable that the annual deaths from snake bite are no fewer than 20,000.

A servant girl in the town of A— whose beauty formed matter of general admiration and discussion, in passing a group of officers in the street, heard one of them exclaim, "By heaven she's painted." Turning round, she very quietly replied, "Yes sir, and by heaven only!" The officer acknowledged the rebuke, and apologised.

The report comes from New York that Minister Thornton has already taken the initiatory steps towards a new treaty between England and the United States, which it is said will cover the fishery question, and therefore the matter will not enter into the instructions of General Schuck, the newly appointed American Minister to London.

Queen Victoria did a very graceful and gracious little action lately. Hearing that the ex-Empress had mentioned that amongst the articles specially regretted which she had been compelled to abandon in her hasty flight was an album given to her long ago by the Queen, containing various interesting portraits, Queen Victoria immediately gave orders that a facsimile should be made and despatched to the imperial refugee.